

Tour de Quebec to Launch in 2008

New Stage Race in Canada

by John Symon

December 19, 2007 (Quebec City, QC) - We have learned of a new road stage race, Tour de Quebec, will take place around Quebec City in 2008. Pedal contacted the event organizer, Jean-Michel Lachance, a pro cyclist himself, riding for Garneau Crocs in 2007 and VW Trek in 2008. While not yet officially announced, Lachance confirmed that the first edition of the Tour de Quebec (TdQ) is scheduled from September 4-7 around Quebec City. There are five stages planned for senior men over four days including a prologue. Cyclists in other categories will ride three stages over two days.

"According to our internal surveys, we expect to have at least 100 senior men coming from across Canada and USA. We won't have any UCI classification for our first year and the Tour de Québec is open to all categories (junior and higher) but only senior men 1-2 riders will compete over the full four days. The other categories will race on Saturday and Sunday," said Lachance.

Lachance claims that the TdQ wasn't organized to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Quebec City's founding in 1608 but nonetheless doesn't mind the coincidence. He maintains that the event was originally planned for 2007 but that the tentative dates then would have been sandwiched between the Tour de Beauce and the Canadian Road Championships, rendering the timing too complicated. But things look much better for 2008.

"After a short survey of some teams, the dates of September 4-7 turn out to be pretty attractive to many of them. Furthermore, the weather at that time of the year tends to be pretty good," he added.

Lachance is being helped by Jean-Yves Labonté, his former coach when racing at the junior level. Labonté also has considerable experience having organized the Louis Garneau Classic (now renamed the Montreal-to-Quebec City Classic) road race.

"Jean-Yves called me on the phone last week offering to lend a hand on specific technical aspects. He is well known with the municipalities, the transport minister, police, etc and his help is appreciated," added Lachance who also mentions that Quebec cycling federation (FQSC) director general, Louis Barbeau, supports the TdQ and is working to help the event obtain a sanction from the Canadian Cycling Association (CCA).

Finding sponsors is a challenge, admits Lachance, claiming that this is a "chicken and the egg" type dilemma where municipalities want to know if there

querra where municipalities want to know if there are sponsors and sponsors want to know if the municipalities are on board.

We asked Lachance what motivated him to become a race organizer. "I am trying to balance high level training, school and work. Event organization is something I can do easily without compromising my athletic training or eventual advanced academic studies. In organizing the Tour de Québec, I want to establish a new cycling stage race in Quebec City and ensure it gets better year after year."

Currently, the only international stage road race in Canada is the Tour de Beauce, scheduled for June 10-15, 2008. As previously reported, the Tour de Beauce will finish in Quebec City this year to commemorate the city's 400th birthday.

For more info on the Tour de Québec visit www.tourdequebec.com